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BETTER HOLLY



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Department of Agriculture

EARLE DILATUSH
Holly Specialist

ROUTE 25

ROBBINSVILLE, N. J.

A PERSONAL WORD

When I began to grow American Hollies more than 35 years ago, nurserymen raised only a few and little was written about the culture of this wonderful native. I had to learn the hard way, through practical experience. Almost from the very beginning certain factors became progressively more evident, perhaps the most important, that my stock was not as hardy as desired.

Southern material, although fine looking, did not do well. Hollies brought in from the swamps and woodlands of New Jersey and Massachusetts, as a whole, did little better. You see, my Hollies have to be able to "take it," for I grow everything in open fields exposed to full sun and wind.

Success started when I found that Hollies transplanted to my fields from exposed places did much better than most of those from protected swamps.

The immediate result was that my work seemed much harder because only a few plants were available where before I had had thousands to choose from. Slowly, year by year, however, my stock has grown stronger and more hardy. This is proven by the fact that Hollies I have sold are doing well with proper care way up north in Minn., Wis., Mich., N. Y., Vermont, N. H., Maine, Nova Scotia, Canada and in hundreds of other far northern places where Holly never grew before.

My lifetime hobby—the hunt for better American Hollies—grows in intensity with the years, but now instead of transplanting specimens to my Holly Farm, I bring back cuttings. This year, 1948, my son Tom rooted 92,000.

Real advances have been made in the selection, propagation and growing of Holly trees. Most people now buy by name the same as they purchase roses and other plants.

If interested write me for I believe I can help. Remember, the thing that counts most is hardiness.

A brief description of six of my named Hollies appears on the following pages. Each differs from the other, but all can be described with just one word—Hardy.

EARLE DILATUSH.

CARDINAL

ILEX OPACA

See Front Cover—Actual Photograph, Colored

CARDINAL has quite an ordinary leaf and without berries would hardly merit a name, yet it is absolutely my most valuable Holly.

Berries! No Holly has ever been propagated that bears like CARDINAL. They weigh the limbs down and even when green are more prominent than the leaves. In winter you hardly see the leaves. At a distance it shows as a red mass—hence its name. People seeing it the first time hardly believe it is a Holly until they examine closely.

A slow, compact grower, it is not a dwarf but fits in wonderfully where space is limited. Many people would like to have a Holly but feel they haven't the room for it. This is just where CARDINAL fits in. It does not overgrow, but has so many berries that it somehow always looks larger than it really is. Bears younger, too. Plants two feet high often have as many berries as most Hollies of ten feet.

A few months ago a lady told me she would like CARDINAL, but just could not find room for a companion. I learned she was friendly with her neighbor, so suggested she buy a male Holly and present it to the neighbor as a gift. The idea pleased and a sale was made on the spot. Since then I have sold the plan to others who have very limited space.

CARDINAL is very adaptable. It has been sold to go along the seashore, in the mountains, in gardens big and little, and always it proceeds to grow slowly, shape up well and bear berries. Makes very little propagating wood so is scarce. The demand for this wonderful Holly is always way ahead of the supply.

Hardy, the mother tree came from Massachusetts.

More Hollies have been planted the last five years than during the preceding 50 years. Better nursery-grown stock has done much to further this.



BOUNTIFUL
Ilex Opaca

BOUNTIFUL

ILEX OPACA

Actual Photograph, Opposite.

Ever travel miles to see perfection in something and then stumble over the real thing right at home? Some time ago I found a Holly—but let's start at the beginning.

The crusade to save Holly in the wild in New Jersey by depriving ourselves of this beautiful symbol of Christmas, while praiseworthy, simply does not work, and our native trees are rapidly disappearing.

The much better way of planting Hollies around our homes is destined to bring it back, and how lucky we are that while having this beautiful tree to look at all the year, we make it more attractive by pruning hard at Christmas! Let's see how it worked out on the tree I started to tell you about.

BOUNTIFUL is 61 years old, 28 feet high, and 22 feet wide. Its former owners say it has yielded the equivalent of six standard boxes of cut Holly annually for the last 21 years and for 20 years before that an average of four boxes a year. The money received has amounted to the amazing sum of \$800.00. Remarkable, too, is the fact that BOUNTIFUL has never received fertilizer or cultivation of any kind. The owners know little or nothing about pruning and say they have never given a thought to tree form—have just cut the ends of the branches that were loaded with berries and sold to persons eager to buy. The branches that lie on the ground take root very easily and the owners have given away or sold dozens of trees, grown this way.

The tree is the most perfect example of a compact, formal Holly I have ever seen. It is not down in Virginia or North Carolina but stands at Beverly, N. J., only a few miles from my home. And I have spent whole vacations seeking "the" Holly!

Hollies are easier grown than many of our so-called hardy evergreens. Buy nursery-grown stock, plant carefully, use Oak Leafmold.



MERRY CHRISTMAS
Печ Ораса

MERRY CHRISTMAS

ILEX OPACA

Actual Photograph, Opposite.

MERRY CHRISTMAS is the best all-round Holly I know. Very hardy, with foliage and berries of good color, it grows rapidly but compactly. I almost cried three years ago when a frightened horse pulling a cultivator past this tree broke a half dozen large limbs off close to the trunk. Today the tree has grown out until it is almost perfect in shape again. This ability to fill out and shape up quickly is all too uncommon. One of my propagators tells me it is the only Holly he has ever rooted 100% in quantity.

I found this Holly some years ago near Bayville, N. J. With my men, I was tying up and digging a hundred large Hollies for a hedge. About noon a doe suddenly jumped from its bed way in under one of the trees we had been working around all the morning. We were about as frightened as the deer. It doesn't make sense that the deer could have remained hidden from us all the morning, but it did.

MERRY CHRISTMAS was in this group and, being outstanding, was brought to my farm. Later it was transplanted high up in the Catskill Mountains, above Eldred, N. Y. No doubt it feels right at home, for there are deer all around it, so many of them that it is fenced in to save it from being eaten. It's really cold there, as ice froze 32 inches on a lake two hundred feet away, last winter.

However, when I got cuttings this summer I found MERRY CHRISTMAS looking better than it did in the "deer" woods in Jersey. This Holly, with wonderful foliage and bright berries, far from its natural habitat, delights and thrills all who see it. Here is a proven tree that can take it. You cannot buy a hardier, better Holly anywhere.

Holly hedges keep dogs and trespassers out. Can be grown in sun or shade. Permanent, will live a hundred years.



OLD HEAVY BERRY
Ilex Opaca

OLD HEAVY BERRY

ILEX OPACA

Actual Photograph, Opposite.

People often point out old landmarks in Burlington, N. J., settled in 1677. Seldom shown, but of more interest to me, are a few old Hollies scattered about the country nearby. Years ago one especially worth while was called OLD HEAVY BERRY by the boys of the neighborhood.

Sturdy as an oak, this Holly has lived through much because of those boys. When quite young, the whole top was cut off and carried away one Christmas Eve. Several times it has had all its limbs cut back to stubs, the last time only three years ago. Many of our fine old Hollies have been destroyed by ruthless cutting, but this old tree possesses so much vigor that it seems hardly to have been hurt at all—it just keeps on growing.

When I first saw OLD HEAVY BERRY a dozen years ago, I immediately felt that it had more character than any Holly I had ever seen. Since then I have stood under it many, many times and its beauty grows on me. It has large, heavy dark leaves. Berries seem to form on every twig. The structure, more like oak than Holly, is most interesting and when I get cuttings I just climb up, for all limbs will bear me (194 pounds).

My first effort to buy met with a decided "No!" and as the years went by I tried so many times that the owner finally said: "You could grow a Holly in less time than you have bothered me about this one." Perseverance won and now I expect to move OLD HEAVY BERRY to my farm.

Help save Holly! Do not buy branches at Christmas that have been torn from native trees. Grow your own!



CAPE COD DWARF

ILEX OPACA (Actual Photograph, Above)

Along the Atlantic seaboard, notably at Cape Hatteras, N. C., Love Lady (near Beaufort Lighthouse, N. J.), and Cape Cod, Mass., are to be found Hollies quite different from the formal BOUNTIFUL described on page three.

These Hollies, rooted deep in the seashore sand, have not been allowed by nature to mature normally. Year by year, heavy storm winds from the ocean have whipped sand through these trees and literally cut them off. Hollies a century old are often not over 10 feet tall. What wonderful trees, each with a grotesque beauty all its own! Transplanted in our gardens they would be priceless, but they cannot be safely moved from their sandy habitat. Often sand drifts over them year after year until their roots are a dozen feet under ground. Cuttings from them have proved quite unsatisfactory for, while the resulting trees have been stunted like the parents, they are not really worth while until they have had time to mature (25-50 years).

CAPE COD DWARF is different. The parent tree found on Cape Cod, perhaps a hundred years old, was not unlike a large Pfitzer Juniper. It went the way of countless other trees in the hurricane of 1939—washed completely away. I am now taking cuttings from a daughter of this tree, two feet high and six feet wide, age eleven years.

A distinct novelty offered nowhere else, CAPE COD DWARF is well worth while.

BITTERSWEET

ILEX OPACA

See Back Cover—Actual Photograph, Colored

In my work in Holly there comes a time each fall right in the midst of the busy selling season when the trees look their poorest. The berries turning from green to red are just an uninteresting dull mixture. Customers do not seem able to visualize what the tree they are interested in will look like a few weeks later when the berries become red.

BITTERSWEET is unique in that it does not seem to go through this transition period. Its berries turn almost over night from green to orange. It is a magnificent Holly with heavy green foliage and berries that set well out on the tips of the branches. At first glance in late October it looks like an orange tree with miniature oranges heavily set all over it. In contrast with other Hollies with dull berries it is striking indeed. During December the berries turn red and are among the first that the birds eat in the spring.

People planting bushes and trees with berries for birds would do well to consider Hollies. Birds, especially cardinals, love to build in their branches. Sometimes in late winter I think cardinals flitting from Holly to Holly just outside my window give me more pleasure than the Hollies themselves. Scarce before I planted large Hollies, I now have plenty of them. You will almost certainly have them, too, if you provide Hollies for them to build in. Thickets of briars, their usual nesting place, are not pretty around the home—Hollies are.

BITTERSWEET came from Dr. Zimmerman at Yonkers, N. Y. I believe he got the cutting from Massachusetts.

Plant Hollies carefully, do not add chemical fertilizers. Use some cottonseed meal, plenty of Oak Leafmold and lots of water.



BITTERSWEET
Ilex Opaca